

with the administration and the other body.

We in the Democratic Caucus now share a new responsibility with our Republican friends for addressing and advancing, as equal partners, the interests of the larger American public. I know of nobody in our caucus who shrinks from or shirks that responsibility. Indeed, I think we all welcome it.

Likewise for our Republican friends, bipartisanship will now become as much a necessity for them as it has been for us Democrats.

Perhaps most importantly, it will not be enough any longer to embrace bipartisanship in word; we will from now on have to demonstrate it in deeds as well. I look forward to beginning this new chapter in the Senate's history with all of our colleagues.

On that score, allow me to say that I hope one of the first orders of business we will take up after reorganizing will be election reform. I realize we have many important matters to consider regarding education, a Patients' Bill of Rights, prescription drugs, energy, the environment, environmental protection, minimum wage, and foreign and defense policies. The list is rather long and tremendously worthwhile.

But I submit to our colleagues that election reform is also an issue that deserves our early consideration in the Senate. It is an issue of fundamental importance for the simple reason that it concerns the most fundamental of American rights, the right to vote. I know a number of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle have given various opinions on this matter, and even drafted legislation. These include my colleague from Arizona, Senator MCCAIN, Senator HOLLINGS, Senator MCCONNELL of Kentucky, Senator SCHUMER, Senator BROWNBACK, Senator TORRICELLI, and others.

There are a lot of ideas kicking around on how we might improve the electoral process in this country. The list reflects a widespread and bipartisan recognition that the events of last November—not just in Florida and not just last November, but ones that have been ongoing for a number of years—illustrate that our electoral system is in need of repair and reform. With only one-half of all the eligible voters in this country participating in a Presidential election and one-quarter of those eligible voters choosing the President of the United States, then I think all of us recognize that, if we do nothing else, there is need for reform that would make this process more inclusive, to reach out to every American who is not participating in this process.

I hope we will act in that recognition in the weeks to come, and I hope we will pass legislation which ensures that many of the mistakes and wrongs, if you will, in the electoral process will forever be events of the past, never to be repeated.

Congressman JOHN CONYERS of Michigan and I have introduced legislation

that will establish some minimum national requirements to ensure that voters, on Presidential races and races involving the National Legislature, regardless of race, disability, or language minority, will not be turned away from the polls in the next Presidential election. This legislation has well over 100 cosponsors in the House of Representatives, the other body, and 50 cosponsors in this Chamber.

This bill would establish three commonsense requirements:

First, that all voting machines and systems used in Federal elections, starting in the year 2004, conform to uniform, nondiscriminatory standards to ensure that no voter will be disenfranchised because of race; that blind and disabled voters can vote with independence and privacy; language minorities can read ballots and instructions in their native language; and all of us can vote with the assurance that our vote will not be canceled because of overvotes, undervotes, or outdated machinery.

Second, the bill requires that all States provide for provisional voting so that no voter who goes to the polls is told he or she cannot vote because their name is not on a registration list or their identification is not good enough.

Third, and lastly, the bill provides that all voters receive a copy or sample ballot with instructions on how to vote, including their rights as voters.

In this Senator's view, with any legislation that doesn't include these three national requirements is simply unacceptable.

Bills that only offer, on a voluntary basis, funding for States to take certain actions will not ensure that Americans—African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, the blind and disabled, and many others—working men and women across the country, can exercise their most precious right to vote and to have their vote counted.

Forty-seven years ago this month, the Supreme Court issued its landmark decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. On that May day, the Court did not rule that States could desegregate their classrooms. It ruled that they would do so "with all deliberate speed," in the now famous words of that decision.

Thirty-seven years ago, when we wrote the Civil Rights Act, the Congress did not say that restaurants, stores, hotels, and other public accommodations could desegregate their facilities. We decreed that they would do so, and do so without delay.

When, in 1965, we passed the Voting Rights Act, the Congress did not say States could, if they so chose, do away with barriers to voting such as poll taxes and literacy tests. We said they had to do away with it because the right to vote was far too precious and too vital to be in any way denied to any American citizen based on race or ethnicity.

Lastly, when in 1990 Bob Dole and President George Bush joined with George Mitchell, TED KENNEDY, and others to enact the Americans with Disabilities Act, we did not leave it to chance as to whether public facilities would be accessible to the disabled. We decided as a country that the time had come to remove those barriers to access.

At critical moments, whether it was to go to a restroom or a restaurant or to have access to a hotel or any other public accommodation, we said that people had the right to be there, and in the case of a voting booth, it certainly ought to hold no less a status than a restaurant, restroom, hotel, or any other public accommodation. People ought to have the right to be in that voting booth, to cast their vote and have it counted.

At critical moments in our history, such as those I just enumerated, our Nation has been resolved in advancing the cause of equality and freedom. We have not settled for voluntary measures when fundamental rights were at stake. I believe the same resolve is called for at this moment in our history when we know that so many Americans, perhaps millions, were denied the right to vote and the right to have their vote counted. With the same resolve demonstrated in times past, we can assure that will never happen again in America as it was so unjustly denied to many in the previous elections.

I urge my colleagues to take a look at the proposed legislation. When we return after the break, I invite any comments, thoughts, and ideas on how this bill can be improved, but I hope there will be strong bipartisan support for this effort. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

#### RETIREMENT OF NANCY BRIANI

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize a member of my staff, Nancy Briani, who will be retiring from the Senate at the end of this month. She will be sorely missed by me and all who have had the opportunity to work with her.

Nancy began her career in the Senate 25 years ago when she joined the staff of Senator Jim Pearson of Kansas as a receptionist.

Following Senator Pearson's retirement in 1978, Nancy became office manager for his successor—Senator Nancy Landon Kassebaum. From the setting up of that freshman Senator's office to closing down operations and turning in the keys 18 years later, Nancy was there and remains a very close friend of Senator Kassebaum.

She has approached her job as office manager in a diligent and methodical fashion. She recognizes that well-organized support functions are a critical foundation in the hectic and fast-paced environment of a Senate office. Nancy has consistently brought to her work a

quiet, but firm, determination to see that things are done properly. She stayed, as we were taught many years ago, until it was done right.

During her tenure in the Senate, Nancy helped guide her coworkers through the transition from 3-color carbon sets to the computer age, and she is a good manager of computers. It fell upon her to determine how to file the "yellows" in a post-carbon era and how to assure that documents were not "lost in space" due to haphazard filing and forgotten file names.

Her proofreading skills are not limited to catching typos. Rather, she brings to bear the full force of her early experience and training as a teacher. One of the most well thumbed cards in her Rolodex is that of the Grammarphone—a grammar hotline operated by Frostburg State University—to make sure our material goes out correctly. After all, a Senator ought to know how to punctuate correspondence.

Shortly after my election to the Senate in 1996, I had the good fortune of bringing Nancy onto my staff after Nancy Kassebaum retired. Her years of experience and her solid professionalism proved invaluable to me in putting together my office here in Washington.

Her effective management of the day-to-day operations of my office has made a real difference in my ability to serve the people of Alabama.

The work that Nancy has done in her 25 years of service in the Senate does not produce headlines in the newspaper or segments on TV talk shows. Indeed, this is the first time in her 25 years that she has come on to the floor of the Senate Chamber. Young staff members get to do that if they are working on legislation, but she has been doing her job managing the work product in our office.

In fact, the best mark of success for an office manager is that the smooth operation of an office is taken for granted. In that, Nancy has excelled.

The truth is that Nancy lives by the greatest American virtues. She is directly honest, she is exceedingly diligent in her work, always taking care to ensure that things are completed and done right. I have greatly admired her frugality, a trait that has fallen from favor but which is much needed today. She watches every penny of the taxpayers' money in a way I greatly admire.

In a host of ways, Nancy has lived by these great American values and has taught them to hundreds of young people who have worked with her as interns and young staffers over the years. Such richness of contribution simply cannot be replaced.

As Nancy leaves the Senate to start a new chapter in her life, she can take great pride and satisfaction in the accomplishments she has made and the respect she has earned.

Just today, staff people from all over this Senate were in our office express-

ing their admiration for her as she had a reception this afternoon. I am grateful for her efforts and the dedication as a member of my staff. I wish her and her husband, Vince, who retired a few years ago after a career with NASA—he was with NASA during the glory days of the space age—I wish Nancy and her husband, Vince, all the best in their future years. We look forward to seeing you both on a regular basis and thank you again for the great contributions you have made to the success of our office and to the people of the United States.

#### VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I call to the attention of the Senate the Veterans History Project that is currently being developed by the Library of Congress.

This is a project that is dear to the hearts of all Americans and a project to which the Congress gave our unanimous support when we passed Public Law 106-380 last fall. Just as a new memorial on the Mall will honor our WW II veterans, a living memorial to all our war veterans will be created by the Veterans History Project. This project, which is part of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, will collect oral histories, along with letters, diaries, photographs, and other papers from veterans of World War I, World War II and the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars, as well as from those who served in support of them. The Veterans History Project will create this national collection by creating partnerships and encouraging participation from a wide range of veterans' organizations, military installations, civic groups, museums, libraries, historical societies, students and teachers, colleges and universities, and citizens and the families of our veterans nationwide.

This is an important national project and one that we should continue to support. Of the 19 million war veterans living in our Nation today, nearly 1,500 of them die each day—1,100 of them having served in World War II. While their own monument is under construction, we can build a lasting national collection that will preserve their wartime memories, actions and experiences. Through this national project we have to encourage local projects and local archives that will collect oral histories of all our war veterans for our children and our children's children.

This is a project worthy of consideration by all Senators as they return home for Memorial Day. That is the reason I come to the Chamber.

I thank our colleagues in the Senate, Senator CHUCK HAGEL and Senator MAX CLELAND for bringing this opportunity to us and to the citizens of our great Nation—a lasting democracy due to the sacrifices of the men and women honored by the Veterans History Project.

I will support funding for this project and for the operations of the Library's

American Folklife Center, where the veteran's collections will be preserved and shared with all. Nearly all of us have worked closely with the American Folklife Center. Many of you will recall the recent Local Legacies Project, done for the Library of Congress bicentennial last year, and other programs it has undertaken over the years.

As we approach Memorial Day I ask the Senate to reaffirm our commitment to our veterans and show our support for the Veterans History Project. As a grateful nation, we must preserve and honor their memories for generations to come.

#### A VICTORY FOR PEOPLE WHO CARE ABOUT KIDS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, at the beginning of this year, the State of Michigan enacted a "shall issue" law that makes it easier to obtain a concealed carry permit and will increase the number of guns on our streets. The law, which was scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2001, takes discretion away from local gun boards and requires authorities to issue a license to carry a concealed weapon to any applicant who meets basic eligibility requirements.

Most law enforcement groups in Michigan reject the proliferation of concealed weapons in our communities and warn that this law will move our State in a dangerous direction. Similarly, gun safety groups, including the Michigan Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence and the Michigan Million Mom March, have voiced their concerns that the expected ten-fold increase in the number of concealed weapons on Michigan's streets would jeopardize the safety of our children. These and other groups that oppose the "shall issue" law joined together to form the coalition of People Who Care About Kids and successfully collected more than 230,000 signatures on a petition calling for a referendum on the law.

Last week, the Michigan State Court of Appeals came down on the side the voters of the State, agreeing that they should be able to decide on the law in a referendum. The appeals panel stated that "the overarching right of the people to their 'direct legislative voice' overrides a constitutional prohibition against referenda for laws that include spending provisions. Unless the decision is overturned by the Michigan Supreme Court, the voters of Michigan will be able to voice their opinions on the "shall issue" law in a referendum in November 2002.

This unanimous decision by the State Court of Appeals panel is not only a victory for the voters of Michigan, but also for the safety of our children and the security of our communities. I am convinced the people of Michigan want to find ways to decrease the amount of gun violence in our communities, not remove discretion from local gun boards with the goal of increasing the number of guns on our